



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

ATHLETICS FOR POLITICIANS.

BY THE RT. HON. SIR CHARLES W. DILKE, BART., M.P.

THE prominent men of the United States have not much turn towards gymnastics. They walk, I am told, or rather rush about from one place to another. A very few cycle or ride on horseback. Those who as youths had been given to hill-walking, common in America—an excellent exercise, which is far better than the mountaineering of a limited class of Britons—abandon the pursuit as they grow old. Ex-President Cleveland is a duck-shooter. The President of Columbia College, it is said, rides both a cycle and a horse, and takes some interest in a mild form of boating. But the ordinary American politician has little idea of sport, of athletics, or even of the open air. He belongs rather to the type of the American business-man, than to that of the American leisured-rich. The American man of business cannot find opportunity for much relaxation, and thinks time, indeed, too valuable to waste upon things which do not bring direct return. The American Universities, which are filled with keen sportsmen, have not much connection, through this class of their graduates, with politics.

On the other hand, we hear that there has arisen among the younger business generation a great delight in golf, hundreds of clubs being formed all over the country for men and women of this class. Up to the present time, the politicians have not figured among them; and walking and a little dumb-bell exercise, with the cycling and horse exercise of the very few, are all apparently that can be laid to their account. I am perhaps, therefore, a missionary as far as the United States Senator and Representative are concerned.

On our side of the water the state of things is very different. Mr. Gladstone, who had been a sculler in his early youth at

Etton, took to riding when he took to politics; and, after having been a regular horseman through a great portion of his life, became in old age a competent woodman and one of the most remarkable walkers that ever lived. The present leader of the House of Commons, although probably by nature far from a strong man, is a good golfer and a fair cyclist, greatly given to both pursuits, and spending upon them an amount of time which is returned him in obviously excellent effect upon his health and strength and Parliamentary power. The Chancellor of the Exchequer rides. The Lord Chancellor was a skilled fencer, and is now one of the most regular of walkers. The Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs is a regular rider; the Attorney-General a cyclist, though not the athlete that he was when the Cambridge two-mile running champion. The Solicitor-General, the Lord Advocate, and many others golf. Upon the other side of the House, Mr. Asquith is a regular golf player. Sir Edward Grey is even greater at true tennis, where he is the equal of the professionals, than in the salmon and trout fishing which he has illustrated by a remarkable book. The chief Liberal Whip, Mr. Herbert Gladstone, is a cricketer, cyclist and golfer, and, like Mr. John Burns, an all-round athlete; and while the late Attorney-General, Sir Robert Reid, who was one of our greatest cricketers, is retiring from that business under the pressure of the law, many of his brother lawyers upon the Liberal side, like Mr. Lawson Walton, are regular riders. Mr. John Morley is now regarded as the least athletic of the Liberal leaders, but even he was in his school football team. In jotting down the names of those who have occurred to me, I have omitted dozens of leading politicians who are known in various branches of sport. Generally speaking, it may be said that our politicians are mostly the sons of country fathers, and largely men who have graduated at the old Universities after having been at public schools. As boys they have ridden, shot, and played cricket; and at the Universities they have rowed, and played cricket and football. But the point is that nearly all of these, having been athletes as boys, have found it wise, as well as pleasant, to keep to some sport in later life, and probably a majority of our House of Commons shoot, or hunt in our sense—that is fox-hunt; while, as I fear, the overwhelming majority of American politicians attend to nothing except politics.

It is, of course, difficult to reform in these matters in old or even in middle age. Men who have had no athletic sport in early life take to such forms of exercise, or even to exercise of any kind, with difficulty. The result is that those who have a tendency to flesh grow fat, and die younger than would otherwise be the case; while the men of spare habit often suffer from nerve excitement, which would probably be lessened in many cases by out-door exercise. All should, then, keep up, as late as possible in life (and that is very late where the exercise is steadily pursued), any exercise that they have learned when young; and we should consider whether there are any forms of exercise which can easily be acquired in middle life.

With regard to keeping up athletics, the possibilities are great. The old are under this disadvantage: that they cannot take up with success the new sports. Some men in England, no doubt, have learned the art of cycling in middle or advanced years. But the elderly man is at a great disadvantage in picking up new tricks, though at little disadvantage, as compared with the young, in many forms of sport where the sport has been practised for long years. There is every reason why we should rather keep up the old forms of exercise than attempt to acquire new ones. The fashion in exercise changes from day to day. A quarter of a century ago, match-croquet, on full-sized grounds—40 yards by 30—with $3\frac{1}{4}$ inch steel-braced hoops, just allowing the balls to pass, which had been a fashionable and a fair exercise in its way, went out. It gave place to lawn tennis, which now in turn is going somewhat out of fashion, and match-croquet is being revived, but revived in competition with a mild form of hockey, as played by mixed clubs of ladies and gentlemen, which has recently become popular as an English sport, after having been for many years almost confined to Scotland. The old cannot follow these fashionable changes, and must adhere to the exercises of their youth, in order to continue to possess that excellence which gives pleasure.

There are some, no doubt, who in these matters are afraid of ridicule; and this may affect the minds of Americans, who, we are told, are more sensitive to ridicule than we are; and it may affect them all the more because in the United States exercise among politicians is an eccentricity. In my own country the ridicule is faced. When an undergraduate, rowing in my College boat, I remember having a feeling of scorn for an old clergyman whom I

saw rowing for a day, and rowing very well, in a rival college eight. Now I am able to smile contentedly, when remarks similar to those which I made on the white-headed clergyman are made about myself by those ignorant of the carrying power of the voice across water, and to feel that, as far as British politicians are concerned, I am in good company.

A man who has never taken violent exercise, or who, having taken it in his youth, has intermitted all such exercise for a long time, must of course be warned, as any medical man will warn him, against taking suddenly to violent exercise late in life. The test of the skilled ear applied to the region of the heart, coupled with a man's own feelings, is, however, a sufficient test of safety. But the opinion of one physician, and particularly of one specialist, should not be implicitly followed, because some doctors regard as "enlarged heart" a heart of a size and character which is only natural in the middle-aged; and two opinions on this matter are better than one. Violence in exercise having been reached progressively in middle age, the heart should be tested while excited, and while the man displays by quick breathing every symptom of being "blown." This test, if applied by a trained medical man without prejudices, is a complete one. Although exercise takes time, it saves life to those politicians who will under favorable circumstances continue or attempt it.

There are men of spare habit who believe that they are better without exercise. The most distinguished debater in the Government of the United Kingdom, who has an excellent seat on a horse, but is never now seen on one, and who is no mean hand at lawn tennis, which he scarcely ever plays, is believed to hold this view. The great majority, however, of British politicians differ from him; and, making allowance for individual peculiarities of constitution, I am convinced that they are right. Even American politicians, although not as a rule, like British politicians, men of full habit who have been athletes in youth, must many of them have been in youth men of the open air, and it is not safe for them, and it is not safe for our Colonial politicians, who nearly all are big men of fleshy habit and sanguine constitution, to abandon exercise when they enter the Legislature. I proceed, then, to assume that, for most politicians, athletics, if possible, are good, and to examine the different kinds of sport in which it is possible for them to engage.

In the United States you are, I believe, more given than we are to pure gymnastics, though less addicted to them than are the Germans. Those who in youth have had the courage needed by these forms of sport—for it needs real courage to carry on such athletics as do not lend themselves easily and daily either to competition in games or to use in varied scenery—can continue in middle age some forms of the athletics that they have learned. The use of dumb-bells and of clubs alone as a rule survives in age; and the chest-expanding rubber machine known, I believe, in America as “the Exerciser,” comes into use to replace the bars, the mast and the trapeze. I am convinced, and I have tried both, that the services of a drill sergeant, who has been in the habit of teaching what are known as “extension movements” to children, will in a few days render the busy man independent of apparatus.

As far as simple posture-gymnastics go, the advantage of doing without weights is great. Every muscle in the body can be perfectly trained, developed, and kept up by extension exercises, and about fourteen or fifteen of the best should be selected by the intelligent learner for himself from among the thirty or forty which a good drill sergeant teaches, and adhered to steadily day by day. The beginner, especially if of mature years, will be amazed at the extraordinary stiffness which, even in a strong man, some of the simplest of such exercises at first produce. I am an enthusiast for posture-gymnastics without apparatus, as I am for the reasonable hill-walking, which is also, as I have said, peculiarly an American delight.

The drawback to posture-gymnastics is their incredible and wearisome dullness. Games have an enormous advantage over them for all but very persevering men. The ball games of the United States are suitable, I fear, mainly to the young, and the same may be said of light-boat rowing, unless a perfect mastery of the art has been acquired early in life.

The pastime of rowing has been immensely improved, when considered as a gymnastic pursuit for the development of the body and its maintenance at a high standard, by the proper use of the sliding seat. In the old days, when I first learned to row, the strain of rowing on the fixed seats then always used—sitting against rather than upon them—was terrible, and it was impossible to race adequately without considerable risk of cramp. Upon the sliding seat, the skilled oarsman, who really knows how to

take the fullest advantage of the slide, finds an easing-off of the work which prevents downright strain, however great may be the positive exertion. But the delight of rowing or sculling with the perfect use of the slide, and with the bringing of great numbers of the various muscles of the body into play, which constitutes the charm of "best-boat" sculling or light-boat rowing, is not for any save those who have taken to rowing before they are twenty years of age. I have never rowed upon your American tank machines, which owing to the mildness of our winters are unnecessary here. They appear to have produced in your best crews a greater uniformity of style than we can pretend to; and I look forward regretfully to the day when we shall succumb to oarsmen from across the seas, as in professional sculling we have already lowered our flag to the Americans of the United States, the Canadians, and our colonists of Australia.

In keeping up rowing, after youthful competence, into middle age, it is probable that American oarsmen will find for themselves, as I have found, the advantage of constantly increasing the size of the oar, and, with a view to balance, the spread of the out-rigger. Muscular strength in those who pursue exercises does not fall off in middle age, but rather increases. What goes is "wind," and the power of sustained exertion at a high rate of speed. The big oar allows the strength to tell and equal pace to be obtained at a lower rate of movement. The best big oars in the world are from the United States, whence I import my own; stiff, strong and light. We are beginning to imitate them here.

Boat sailing, although more an American and Australian pursuit, proportionately speaking, than a British sport, is common to both our countries, and I turn now to other exercises not specially American or specially British, but which should be considered.

Cycling is a sport on which my observations must be taken with a grain of salt. I have long been connected with a large cycling club; for the pursuit prevailed among clerks in England before, a few years ago, it extended to "Society" on the one hand and to the workmen on the other. But I cannot cycle. I have never tried. There can be no greater mistake for the middle-aged and the old, who already practise gymnastics in which they are competent, than to attempt to acquire new ones, which, if they give sufficient time already to their old forms of sport, they cannot do without jeopardizing that excellence which is essential to in-

terest and amusement. That cycling has spread so widely would seem, at first sight, to prove that it must be excellent; but some deductions should be made from this conclusion. It spread very slowly, until it suddenly became fashionable, except among those to whom it was useful, not as an exercise, but as a positive means of locomotion. Cycling prevailed in France, in virtually its present form, for a great number of years before it spread either to great numbers of persons in France or to other countries. It became fashionable, I think, because of the sudden improvement in machines. Considered as gymnastics, cycling makes people work and causes the blood to circulate; but, as it seems to me, in such a manner as not perfectly to exercise the whole body. Many cyclists lean forward on their machines, and I cannot myself believe that this treatment of the chest is advantageous. Cycling, however, is not only widespread, and, on the whole, cheap and easily practised in a country of good roads, but it is an exercise which undoubtedly has in many cases been competently pursued by the middle-aged, and among them by middle-aged politicians who had not learned when they were young.

Golf is another exercise, much favored in both our countries, which is capable of being acquired in middle age, but also one as to which I cannot speak from personal acquaintance. Its enormous advantage appears to me to be that it is a sport in which it is possible to handicap fairly all except the very worst class of players. It is impossible to overestimate the gain to an exercise from this possibility. In running, swimming, cycling, lawn tennis and some other sports, handicapping is possible. In others it is, indeed, difficult to apply. Golf permits of a fair handicapping, which is essential to competition among those of various ranks in the art.

All that I have said of the dullness of posture-gymnastics, and of the advantage, especially in middle and old age, of some element of sport which renders athletics amusing, and gives to the pursuit of them the illusion of youthfulness, illustrates the importance of selecting games in which the superior and the inferior players can meet upon something like fair terms; and of these two great sports, cycling and golf (neither of which I practise), I must unhesitatingly give the palm to golf, on the ground of the advantage which I have attempted to describe.

There is one fashionable amusement of recent times which is

common to both our countries, but which is hardly worth naming in an article on athletics for politicians. Skating on in-door ice is the delight of some young men and of many ladies of youthful or of doubtful age; but it is not, I think, to be recommended to mature politicians, and there is a consideration applying to it, and to at least two other forms of exercise, which involves the confession that, as one grows older, one dislikes being hurt. Why at eighteen a man should rather like to receive a violent blow on the nose, and why at fifty he should regard such an occurrence with unutterable disgust, it is somewhat hard to say. It is not a question, I think, of courage. My impression is that, as a rule, the courage of resolution greatly increases with age. Certainly, in my own case, I was much more of a coward when a boy than I am now; and believe that this is a common, if not a general or a universal, experience. But as a boy, while I liked to hit my companions terrific blows upon the leg or the funny bone of the arm with a single-stick, I did not at all mind being myself hit in the same way. I do now. Boxing must be ruled out as an exercise for the middle-aged and the old—although it is a grand pastime—because of this disinclination to be hurt. No middle-aged man who has received from his teacher or his friend a “double knock” upon “the mark,” will deny this statement. Single-stick may be carried on in pads, but I do not myself believe in any exercise for which padding is necessary: for padding in non-professionals means indifference and also slowness, although the shin-guard of the professional footballer does not seem to make him slow. The former of these considerations does not apply to cricket, because it is not the body, as a rule, at all events, that is bowled at, but the stumps, and, padding or no padding, the stumps go down. I return to in-door ice. I fear that, lying as it does on concrete which cannot “give,” indoor ice is even harder to fall upon than is outdoor ice, and that is saying a good deal. Boys and girls can be tumbled about on ice without as a rule being maimed for life; but this is not the case with the old gentleman. Racquets and the various forms of tennis are not very suitable to middle life. Punting, now a most popular British exercise, can be kept up, on suitable waters (which are not everywhere to be found), by those who have learnt it young. Canoeing is not, in my opinion, an exercise to be recommended. The “Rob Roy” canoe, formerly popular in England, and the Canadian canoe of recent days, both possess the

advantage of introducing the canoeist in an agreeable way to some forms of scenery which can hardly otherwise be visited. But the position in each case is a somewhat cramped one, and the exercise develops the arm at the expense of the chest and leg. Running, swimming, and American baseball I omit as unsuitable for the old, but billiards should be mentioned, as many an old gentleman walks four or five miles quietly at this game after his dinner, with good results. Baseball, I understand, can be kept up into middle-life, though not, of course, in first-class company. The chief drawback to billiards, as an exercise for the old, is the unfortunate atmosphere which is too often artificially created in billiard rooms. The game needs the eye of a cricketer and the hand of a violinist: what wonder if the old gentleman is beaten by his son!

I pass briefly over such British sports as fox-hunting, both because it is unlikely to be useful to recommend it to American politicians, and because jumping is not to be recommended to the old. Jumping means great risk of rupture; and while some fox-hunters continue their sport until late in life, they are the exception and not the rule. Those who have hunted here in youth generally retain the habit of riding, but it is park riding as an easy exercise. Many of our politicians have ridden habitually until they are over eighty years of age, and the eloquent Mr. Gathorne Hardy, now Lord Cranbrook, cuts an admirable figure on his horse at the age of eighty-five. Our shooting is a tamer sport than your "hunting," and means only walking with a weight. Some of our sportsmen shoot in such a manner as to manage to walk without the weight, or even not to walk at all. Deer-stalking is a form of British sport enjoyable only by the very rich or their best friends, which is no doubt admirable, but not easily capable of imitation. Cricket is a peculiarly British sport, although not unknown in the United States. Its weak point as an exercise is that it is a game for only one season of the year. Cricket can be kept up in late middle-age, as we know by the case of Dr. Grace. But Dr. Grace is an exceptional man; and all-round cricket, involving fielding in all forms, is not a sport which can often be kept up into old age, far less one which can be acquired by the middle-aged.

There is one exercise which, though French, Italian and Magyar, is worthy of consideration by Britons and by the people, and even the politicians, of the United States.

Fencing has recently come into fashion in England among a limited class as a pure sport, without that unfortunate connection with the duel which it formerly had in England and Scotland, Spain and France, and still has in France, Italy and Hungary. It is difficult to say why fencing has not spread more as a mere form of gymnastics. It has immense advantages. It is a sport into which the element of competition enters largely. It is a quick exercise, if I may be allowed this convenient expression: it thoroughly warms the body and produces in a few minutes the feeling of lightness which is essential in a good exercise. In its rapidity in producing this result it rivals boxing, without the element of pain, and sawing without the element of dullness. Fencing, like boxing, can be practised all the year round, and is, therefore, at an advantage as compared with such games as are not possible in wet or cold or windy weather—a great point in the case of any recreation to be pursued regularly for the double purpose of health and amusement. Fencing is a cheap exercise. It is true that when a boy goes to a fencing school to learn, his unfortunate parents are made on the first day to invest not only in the useful mask, but also in the unnecessary padded jacket, in the foolish glove (instantly burst and spoilt), and in special shoes which are not only unnecessary but harmful. What is needed for fencing, besides a good mask provided with a leather beard to save the throat, is the ordinary riding glove and the thinnest, and therefore cheapest, pair of rubber shoes that can be bought. For fencing upon planks or smooth pavement the thin rubber shoe, fitting tightly to the foot, has an immense advantage over the ordinary fencing shoe of leather; and for fencing upon gravel, or loose cinder-path, or brick rubbish, ordinary boots—if the heels are not too high—are excellent. A pair of foils will with care last a long time, especially if too great proximity of the fencers to each other is discouraged, and the pupils are prevented from practising the dangerous folly of drawing back the hand until it is close to or in a line with the lunge's body. Rapier fencing is more costly, because it is impossible, in fencing with spirit, to avoid a certain percentage of breakage in the blades, and good rapier blades are extraordinarily difficult to procure. Fencing is an exercise which, if skill is attained even in middle life, can be kept up to a great age, and there are many good fencers in France who are old men.

The most serious difficulty about fencing is the absence of competent teachers. We have now one Englishman who is a really good teacher, but this is a novel phenomenon. The ordinary drill-master is so slow of hand that, while he knows all the movements and the names for them, and has a sort of grammatical knowledge of the art, he is unable to impart the sacred fire. France alone, as yet, has produced teachers of fencing who are able to teach the more classical side of this art. There is in fencing "*haute-école*," as there is in Viennese and was in Parisian riding, and classical fencing is an art which rivals the best dancing in grace, but is infinitely more difficult of attainment. It is not fencing of this kind, taught only by a limited number of French masters, that I recommend. Perfection or even competence in it can only be acquired at the expense of years of drill under a good master, a training which is costly and dull.

Some may wonder that I have passed over the Italian school of fencing. But I have not done so; I am coming to it. I have passed it over only as far as *haute-école* is concerned. As I myself, though self-taught, belong to what is called by some a form of the Italian school, I may be allowed to say that to compare our art to the highest art of France is like comparing a good dray horse to a thoroughbred. The modern rapier fencer, while possessing an excellent gymnastic, is neither classical nor beauteous.

The origin of the latest developments of rapier fencing was the duel. French barristers and politicians rose in revolt against the superstition which condemned them to be run through the body, because the responsible editor of some libel was alleged to be some gentleman who had been a master of the foil through life. These able and practical men said to one another, "These people practise with a foil which has no guard for the hand; they count only by a pure convention touches of the body, neglecting the head and leg, and above all the arm. What if we learn to fence with heavy rapiers, with a large guard for the hand, exactly the same as those with which we have to fight?" They practised, and they found to their amazement that, after a few lessons, they began to develop a style in which any man with a strong arm and with courage could more than hold his own against the graceful foil fencer, who was no sooner placed in front of them than he forthwith touched his own hand or arm upon their all-but motionless points.

So far, so good; but then came the institution of rapier schools, often conducted in the open air under duelling conditions, and the discovery that a style which was useful against a foil fencer of the graceful *haute-école* was of no effective use between two rapier fencers. Of protective use it might be. They stood looking at one another; neither could do anything at all, and the result was the gradual development of a new school of fencing.

There appeared in 1887 a book of rapier lessons, bearing the name of Jacob, a well-known rapier teacher, with excellent prefaces by Messrs. Ranc, the Senator and Historian, de Cassagnac, the well-known politician, and other rapier fencers. Jacob's method was based, as has all along been that of M. de Cassagnac, on the essential difference between rapier and foil fencing; but neither the teacher nor the amateur ever went so far as to forbid the bending of the arm. On the contrary, although the guard was to be a lower one than for the foils, and the rapier was to remain in a horizontal position, yet it was distinctly specified that the arm should be bent for the purpose of being able to make proper parries and to give lung power either in attack or in *riposte*. Jacob and his friends went further, and maintained that it was easier to escape touch on the arm if it were bent than if it were straight.

Tavernier, both in the first edition of his book on the art of duelling, in 1884, and in the later editions, agrees with this proposition, and, although he attacks the classical school as unfit for rapier work, he directly opposes the teaching which is now beginning to prevail. Says Tavernier:

"Some amateurs are in the habit of fencing with the arm always straight at full length. I have even heard that a French fencing master teaches this method, which comes from the Italian school. Practice has shown that the system offers little advantage and great drawback, and I am unable to understand the partial success which welcomed this extremely irregular mode of fencing. Of course, it is true that the first time that the fencer finds in his face this spit, always stuck out, he is upset by it, especially if he is a fencer without judgment. On the other hand, as soon as one understands this play one easily masters it. Beats, as well as *froissés* and *croisés*, may be usefully employed against this tension style."

Tavernier also thinks that it is possible to tire out those who resort to this mode of fencing. Moderate as Tavernier was in his censure on classical school work as applied to rapier fencing, he was, nevertheless, attacked by the strongest of the classics.

There has indeed been a remarkable change in the last few years. It may be safely said that all the best masters of the day have come at least as far as Tavernier, or somewhat further; that the fencing of the high-and-dry classical school is no longer attempted by any rapier fencer; and that the entirely new school which Tavernier himself condemned has grown and strengthened, and is not unlikely to win.

Tavernier thought that the method of Baudry and the new men was Italian. That they have learned something from the Italians is undoubted, but the main characteristic of Italian rapier fencing is its eccentricity; and of all schools of fencing the new French school is the least eccentric. In other words, while the new French rapier fencers adopt from the Italians, or have equally discovered for themselves, the fact that the arm should be stretched at length and the point perpetually kept almost in line, they do not attempt to scare the adversary by any of the methods to which the Italians resort, but very properly hold that all such barbarous devices are useless against well-trained men.

Considered as an exercise, the duelling rapier fencing of France is admirable for the middle-aged and old. It possesses every advantage, and the sole drawback is, as I have said above, the difficulty of finding teachers. If, however, an able man, such as one of your politicians should be, would invest in rapiers from Alsace or from France, with extra screw blades in dozens, and would learn the ordinary movements from any ordinary drill instructor, he and his friends would, I think, very soon be able to develop duelling fencing for themselves, and would find that they could make it for themselves an excellent game, capable of being practised in the open air in summer, and in almost any room in the bad season.

This article would not be complete without some hint as to training. Many middle-aged men take to athletics of some form for the purpose of making themselves thinner. Reduction of fat is easy, but not by means of gymnastics. The object can be attained at once by diminution of the taking of liquids and foods containing water, but either the services of a physician should be called in to watch the process, or the patient must take every possible means of most carefully watching the effect of the process for himself. There is a superfluous weight and a superfluous circumference which can be easily reduced to a certain point.

But as we grow older the limit of safe reduction is very easily reached, and the moment that is passed danger at once arises. I can reduce my weight two pounds a day steadily, but after I have done it for five or six days I reach the danger point, and I fancy that a few more days would kill or irreparably harm me. Most men, I fear, eat and drink too much in early middle life. We all get ourselves into a state which in our dogs would lead us to say, "I fear the old fellow will have but a short life." We have to deal with facts as we find them, and to take ourselves as we are at the given time. A gradual diminution of liquids is desirable, but the process must not be pushed too far and must be watched with the greatest care. The amount of exercise during a vacation can, of course, be increased day by day even in middle age. The heart's action strengthens, the breathing becomes freer—the fact that there is no overstrain can be tested by constant observation of the heart by a medical man, and if sleep is improved no danger need be feared. I am no advocate of coddling, and I do not even preach against abstention from competitive athletics in late middle age. But we are on the edge of danger, and while competition may be immensely beneficial in preserving that illusion of youth which is essential to all spring in life and to all good work, watchfulness must be constant against excess in the imitation of the athletics of the young.

To politicians I would say (and the remark applies also to professional men) that good exercise, as contrasted with mere chamber gymnastics, gives them the chance of that greatest of delights—a second life, a life in another world, a life of illusion, perhaps, as Ibsen would tell us, but one which takes them entirely out of themselves, and causes them to cease to trouble others or to be troubled by the vexations of working life.

CHARLES W. DILKE.